

# LAMBDA VALLEY

January 1988

MONTHLY

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## Homopolitics A Look at Local Politics from a Gay Point of View

by ED VERBA AND A. LIEBERMAN

It's January, and the new mayors, city council members, and other elected officials are taking the seats they won last November, full of plans and enthusiasm. Meanwhile, the Lehigh Valley gay and lesbian community is holding its collective breath, waiting to see what the new guard will mean for us.

In any situation, the mayors of the three major cities in the area have the lion's share of influence. Allentown's mayor, Joe Dadonna (D), still has another year in office, and Sal Panto (D) of Easton was just reelected. Bethlehem mayor Ken Smith (R) is newly elected and is therefore an unknown quantity.

Dadonna is a man without a cause. During the same week in April 1986, he said to members of the Lambda Center, "My door is always open to all citizens. You don't have to stage a march to get my attention," and then told the mainstream press that he is a Roman Catholic and bases his decisions on AIDS and on the lesbian and gay community on the opinions of the church. Allentown city government officials have been heard to complain that Dadonna allows the council to make decisions without his input, but then criticizes those decisions. The stands this mayor does take tend to range from conservative to very conservative.

Panto is said to be unresponsive. He is certainly unresponsive to the homosexual community. He is viewed as a strong leader in Easton — the authoritarian, old school, back-room kind of politician who really directs from the top. Relatively liberal, Panto is a Democrat and a Roman Catholic; both affiliations appear to influence his decisions.

Smith is the first Republican mayor in Bethlehem in 12 years, has no previous political leadership experience, and, according to the *Bethlehem Globe-Times*, is not always a 'party-line' politician.

### RECOGNITION OF PRIDE WEEK

The influence of the mayor is key in deciding one issue crucial to the acceptance of gay men and lesbians — the recognition of Lesbian and Gay Pride Week in June. All this involves is a simple proclamation by the mayor. It wouldn't entitle gay folks to city funding for a march or anything else like that. What it would do, though, is give us the feeling that we are accepted as valued members of our towns.

Furthermore, the recognition of Lesbian and Gay Pride Week would indicate that the homosexual minority is indeed a powerful voting bloc and a viable minority, just as are Blacks, other people of color, and women.

To an extent, we are already recognized as a voting bloc in some quarters. For example, when Bethlehem's outgoing mayor, Gordon Mowrer, was about to be appointed to office, he made a point of going over to the Lambda Center to spend a few hours finding out what it was doing and learn about its point of view of the lesbian and gay community in Bethlehem.

Another good sign: The Lambda Center sent out surveys to all the candidates in the last election in order to prepare a voters' guide. The Allentown group in the last election in order to prepare a voter's guide. The Allentown group took it seriously, and with reason; all the city members of

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## Highlights of the Month

New years start off with New Year's Parties, and this one won't be any different. Sure, all the bars will be doing their finest — don't miss that. But when you're thoroughly sick of that scene, head over to the Lambda Center for the after-the-party party. It starts at 1 am, costs \$5, and you can get breakfast there and party the rest of the night away.

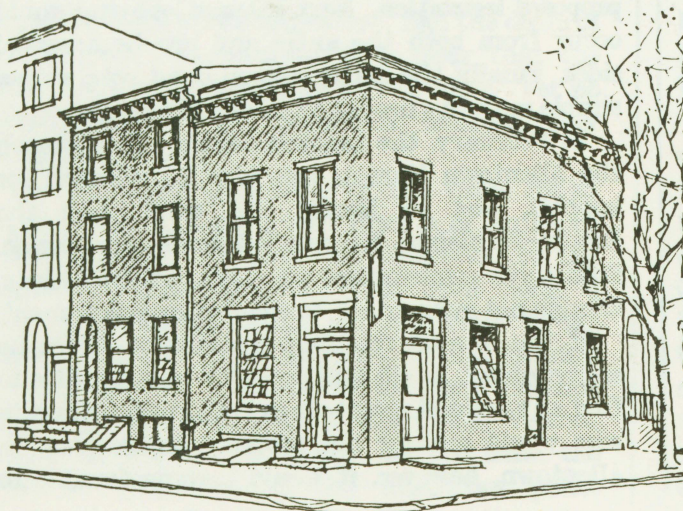
The next big event is also a Lambda Center one. In fact, it's just for paid members of the Center, and they go all out on this one. It's the annual members' meeting, and it'll be an extravagant splurge of a party. If you're not a member yet, though, don't despair. \$15 memberships will be on sale at the door. That's January 15th, 7:30 pm, at the Center, 742 Hamilton Mall.

Video night at the Lambda Center is on the third Tuesday of the month at 8:00 pm. You can

catch *Making Love* with your friends. Remember *Charlie's Angels*? This flick lets you relive some of that old sitcom's best moments.

On the fourth Tuesday of the month, Lehigh Valley NOW will be meeting at the Jewish Community Center on 22nd and Tilghman Streets at 7:30 pm. Here's your chance to meet lots of feminist women with films from the library to show and clips from newspapers to share.

Finally, some good news for people looking for something new and exciting to join. A woman new to the area used to co-facilitate a rap group down in Kentucky. Now, she's hoping to start a co-ed one here in Allentown. More news to follow, but if you're interested, call the Lambda Center (which isn't really affiliated with it, but will take your call anyway) and leave your name and number. She'll get in touch with you once she gets the message. □



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## HOMOPOLITICS

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Allentown who responded to the survey won the offices for which they ran. And in the Lehigh County elections, everyone who won an office had responded.

Recognizing Lesbian and Gay Pride Week would be a powerful way to further court the lesbian and gay vote. So why don't the politicians take advantage of this no-cost, easy way to garner votes?

It seems that, while courting the gay vote in New York and Philadelphia is an absolute necessity, here in the Lehigh Valley, it can be perceived as the kiss of death. It hurt Jane Wells-Schooley when she ran unsuccessfully against Don Ritter in 1984 for the position of U.S. representative from the Lehigh Valley. Her opponents trounced her, in part, by advertising that she had been president of a chapter of NOW (National Organization for Women) and that she had been in favor of that group's sexual orientation anti-discrimination clause.

Fear of being associated with homosexuals, combined with a healthy dose of plain old homophobia, can probably explain why, in Easton and Bethlehem, none of the city council candidates nor mayoral candidates chose to respond to the Lambda Center candidate survey (though two council candidates were not sent surveys).

It also offers an explanation of why Sal Panto, mayor of Easton, said in response to a question from Rod Blacklock on a 1985 WFMZ talk-show forum, MEET THE MAYOR, "I would no more support a Gay Pride Week in Easton than I would support a bigamy week." (This, from a man who dumped his pregnant wife soon after his first election in 1983.)

Political fear does not necessarily explain, however, why Allentown has yet to recognize Pride Week, or why Dadonna, like the mayors of Bethlehem and Easton, has never accepted an invitation to the annual Lambda Center awards dinner. The evidence from the candidate survey shows that the gay vote is indeed useful in Allentown. Mayor Dadonna has, in fact, been asked each year to proclaim Pride Week. He never says no, but never does it either. Maybe he just needs to be pushed harder.

## INCLUSION IN THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

Pushing did not do much good in 1982, when Le-Hi-Ho had a demonstration on the steps of City Hall to ask that gay men and lesbians be included in that city's anti-discrimination clause (which currently protects people of all religions, genders, races, and degrees of disability, among other groups, from discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations, and health care). We still need to be added to that clause, not only in Allentown, but in the entire tri-city area and on the county levels.

Part of the problem with the 1982 demonstration, which involved a mock closet door set up in front of City Hall, was that no gay people were willing to be quoted by the press with their real names or to testify to the council when it was deciding how to vote. The anti-homosexual groups, on the other hand, were out in full force.

Today, part of the problem that stands in the way of getting added to the anti-discrimination clause is that politicians have not yet forgotten the anti-gay sentiment of 1982.

The M.O. for getting the anti-discrimination clause amended is to get a vote of support from each city's human relations commission first. That endorsement can be taken to the city's councils, who have the final vote on the issue. An endorsement from the mayor would have a similar effect as one from the human relations commission. Then, an individual council member must be found to introduce and sponsor the proposed legislation. Next, intense lobbying would occur from both the anti- and pro-homosexual sides. Finally, the entire council must vote, with a simple majority needed to amend the clause.

In February, the Lambda Center will approach the Allentown Human Relations Commission for support, and in March, will meet with the Easton-Bethlehem Human Relations Commission. Both those commissions are supportive and likely, though not guaranteed, to endorse an amendment.

If the human relations commission offers its endorsement, it will still probably be impossible to find any council members in Bethlehem or Easton who would sponsor the proposed legislation. In Allentown, however, it would become feasible to

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approach the Allentown city council, where several members could be counted on for support.

If that point were reached in Allentown, the chances of an amendment might be very good, since it is rumored that Dadonna may not run for reelection in '89. If he doesn't plan to run, he may be able to offer legislative support to the lesbian and gay community without fear.

## RESPONSE TO GAY BASHING

Along with recognition of Pride Week and an amendment to the anti-discrimination clause, the third issue crucial to the gay community of the Lehigh Valley is physical protection from homophobes. That protection has to come from the local police forces, the chiefs of which report, of course, to their city's mayors.

Anti-homosexual brutality is on the rise, according to the Philadelphia Lesbian and Gay Task Force, and there are a number of things the police could do that would cut down on crime. Yet they appear to turn their heads.

For example, in January of 1986, a gay man was beat up by a gang in Allentown near 10th and Linden Streets. He called the police. After they arrived and took his statement, which included the information that he felt the attack had been homophobic, rather than driving him somewhere safe, they told him to wait a few minutes while they went to find the gang. They would be back soon. He waited an hour and then left.

Two months earlier, in November of 1985, the Stonewall doors were shotgunned. Had the doors of Winston's been shotgunned, it is clear that the police would have responded in full force. Yet no investigation of the Stonewall incident ever materialized.

On the bright side, none of the three major cities in the area have any reports of anti-gay police brutality. In fact, one detective for the Allentown police department has even taken a step beyond non-brutality into real help. In the fall of 1985, the detective came to the Lambda Center and ran a workshop on anti-gay violence, which was co-sponsored by the Crime Victims Council of the Lehigh Valley. At the time, the detective pledged that the Allentown police department would always be open for discussion on the issue.

Another star on the Allentown P.D.'s record is their patrol car parked outside the Lambda Center when people have to leave there late at night. They usually do this on request, but have also offered their protection unsolicited in the past.

While the police department does report to elected officials, the link between the police officers and the local government is tenuous (except in Easton). As a result, elected officials have little effect on the actions of the police, whether those actions are to be encouraged or censured, unless those actions are reported.

Elected officials do, however, have influence over the office of public services, which could provide two major positive changes to decrease anti-gay violence in Allentown. The Lambda Center has twice requested that the chief of police and the director of public services add a street lamp to the northeast corner of 12th and Chew Streets to cut down on attacks on that volatile corner. At the same time, the Lambda Center asked that the nighttime barricade on Hamilton Street be moved from 10th Street to 11th Street to cut down on the amount of traffic, and its accompanying jeers and anti-gay projectiles, driving by the Stonewall at night. These requests were never acknowledged.

## WHO WILL SPEAK FOR US?

To close this analysis, we think it is worth noting that, throughout this article, every time we have wanted to say "The gay community talked to the local government" we have said instead, "The Lambda Center talked..." or "Le-Hi-Ho talked..." What does this mean?

Historically, for 19 years, Le-Hi-Ho has spoken on the behalf of the gay community to anyone who would listen. They, for instance, masterminded the 1962 demonstration on the steps of City Hall. More recently, since the Lambda Center was opened by Paul Kendall, the late Wayne Writer, Carol Bloch and a number of others in 1984, the more vocal members of the Center have taken over that role to some extent. Part of the reason is that the founding members, a small group of energetic, middle-aged women and men, started a tradition of being openly gay, on television, on the radio, and in the press. That tradition has continued, with some of the new leaders of the

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Lambda Center continuing to be openly gay.

These people are not elected spokespeople for the homosexual minority of the Valley. They do have a small constituency of people to whom they must answer — the other 170-odd members of the Lambda Center, along with the members of Le-Hi-Ho and other gay and lesbian organizations in the area. The leaders are held accountable by their associates in much the same way a Black spokesperson is held accountable by the Black community. That's something, but since we know that one in ten people is gay, these spokespeople can not really represent the entire homosexual minority.

So, should the Lambda Center speak for homosexuals? As long as it is one of the only gay voices accessible to the media, it will continue to do so. But it will not become truly effective, nor will it reach its goal of political recognition for gay men and lesbian women, until it is one of many voices.



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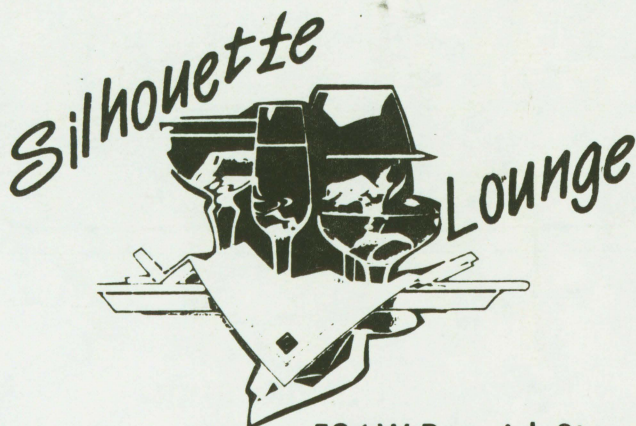
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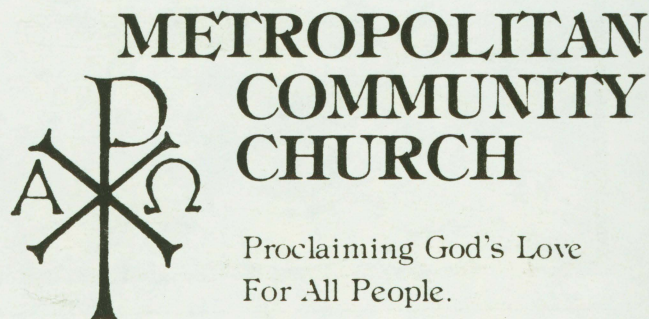


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AD SIZE	DIMENSIONS	SINGLE PRICE	4 FOR PRICE OF 3
Business card	3.5" x 2"	\$14	\$42 (\$10.50 each)
Quarter page	3.75" x 5"	\$25	\$75 (\$18.75 each)
Half page	8" x 5" or 3.75" x 10.25"	\$45	\$135 (\$33.75 each)
Full page	8" x 10.25"	\$70	\$210 (\$52.50 each)

Advertising reservations close the 5th of the preceding month.

Camera-ready materials due the 10th of the preceding month.

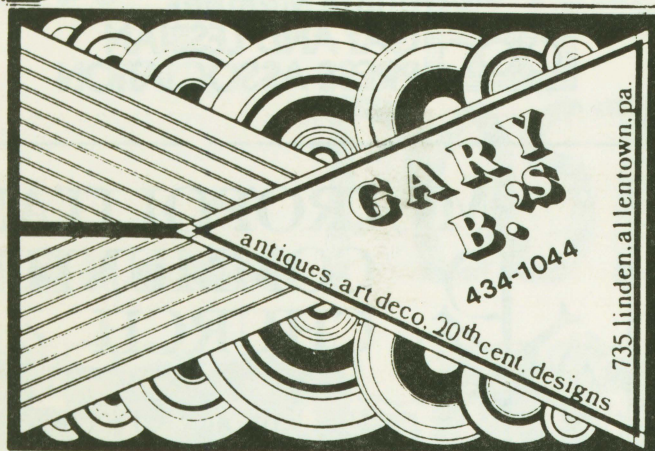
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Dear Members and Friends:

I trust everyone had a pleasant and safe holiday. I hope everyone got what they wanted from jolly old St. Nick.

Well, onto the new year.....

Your Lambda Center Board of Directors have an exciting year planned. On Friday, February 15 at 7:30pm, the center will be hosting its Annual Membership Meeting. This is a very important meeting so I hope all will attend. There will be refreshments following the meeting so it won't be all business but a little fun thrown in.

Mark your calenders for The Annual Lambda Dinner and Awards Presentation on Friday, March 11 at 7:30pm. Cash bar starts at 6:30pm. Ticket price is \$25 for members and \$27.50 for friends. The dinner will be held at The Hilton, 9th and Hamilton Streets, Allentown.

The ongoing Video Night will be the fourth Thursday of the month. January's film will be "Making Love."

At the top of your new year's resolutions list should be joining the Lambda Center if you are not already a member or renewing your membership if it has lapsed. The price is still only \$15 and includes discounts off events for members.

Speaking of membership.....

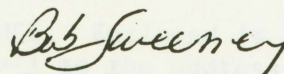
"The Time Is Now" Membership Campaign to garner new members and renew past members was a huge success. Thank you everyone!

Enclosed for your reading pleasure is Le-Hi-Ho's publication of the Lambda Valley Monthly, the Lehigh Valley's only gay newsletter. The newsletter is published free of charge by the Lehigh Homophile Organization, the oldest ongoing gay organization in the country!

In closing, I wish all of you a happy and prosperous new year and I look forward to seeing you at the center's exciting events planned for 1988.

Thank you for your continued support of the Lambda Center, Pennsylvania's only Gay/Lesbian Community Center.

For the Board of Directors of the Lehigh Valley Gay/Lesbian Community Center.



Bob Sweeney  
Board Member LVGLCC



January 1988

LAMBDA CENTER

NEW YEAR'S EVE EXTRAVAGANZA

It's not too late ... You can still be part of the Lambda Center's "After the Party" Party. Join us begining at 1:00 a.m. (just one short hour into 1983) for music, food, fun, and more. No need to quit at 2:00 this year. We're going to party until dawn and maybe then some. Everything is free once you're in the door and the cover is only \$5.00. The party is BYOB. Make the Lambda Center the FIRST place you go in 1983. Join us at our "Party After the Party".

REMEMBER LAMBDA CARES: - No matter what your plans for the Holidays; arrive safely ... Don't booze and cruise!!!

ANNUAL MEETING AT LEHIGH VALLEY LESBIAN AND GAY COMMUNITY CENTER

The Annual Meeting of the Lehigh Valley Lesbian and Gay Community Center, Inc., the parent non-profit corporation of the Lambda Center, AIDS Services Center and the Hotline, will take place in accordance with its by-laws on 15 January 1983 at 7:30 p.m. at 742 Hamilton St., Allentown, PA.

All members are eligible to vote for the slate of candidates for the Board of Directors and all other matters before the meeting. Any person wishing to be considered for a seat on the Board or to add anything to the agenda should place those requests in writing to the Board; c/o Secretary, Board of Directors LVLGCC, P.O. Box 1656, Allentown, PA 18105-1656.

All requests must be received by 4:00 p.m. 11 January 1983.

A reception will follow the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

LET'S PARTY

The FIFTH ANNUAL LAMBDA CENTER DINNER AND DANCE will be held 11 March 1983 at Allentown's Hilton Hotel. Tickets are \$27.50 (still only \$25.00 for members) and \$180.00 for an eight seat table. Tickets are available from all Board members, at all Lambda Center events or by mail. Annually this is the premiere event planned by the Gay and Lesbian Community for the Gay and Lesbian Community in the Lehigh Valley.

This year we celebrate in style with a dinner at 7:30 p.m., the presentation of the Annual Lehigh Valley Lambda Awards, and then dance to the rhythmic sounds of our D.J.. A cash bar cocktail hour will precede dinner starting at 6:30 p.m.

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☐ Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ seats for me (us) at the FIFTH Annual Lambda Center Dinner and Dance. Enclosed you will find \$27.50 for each ticket (\$25.00/members). I understand I will receive the tickets by mail to the address below.

☐ Please reserve me a table at the DINNER AND DANCE. Enclosed is \$180.00 for eight tickets. I understand I will receive the tickets by mail to the address below. I want the table reserved in the name of \_\_\_\_\_

(Name of Key person or group)

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Thank you for your support of the dinner and I personally look forward to seeing you at the dinner. Ed Verba



MEMBERSHIP

THE TIME IS NOW CAMPAIGN is history as of the end of 1987. The success of the campaign won't be known for a few more weeks. In the next issue of LVLGCC UPDATE we will let you know how it ended. Already we are looking to the 1988 campaign and the goal of 300 members by year's end. That means we will need every current member to renew membership in September and to add one hundred more during that same time. That's a 50% increase.

However it's not too late to become a member and you don't have to wait until September to join. You can join from January to September at the pro-rated price of \$10.00. By joining now you will be eligible to vote at the upcoming Annual Meeting and to take advantage of the Member discount to the Dinner and Dance. Help us help you by joining with us.

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MASS. GAYS/LESBIANS NEED OUR HELP

(From the Philadelphia Lesbian and Gay Task Force 12/21/87) - David La Fontaine of the Greater Boston Lesbian and Gay Alliance is asking for the support of Gays and Lesbians across Pennsylvania to contact Gov. Dukakis in order to initiate him to compel his State's Senate Committee on Third Reading (A.K.A. THE Graveyard Committee) to halt its delaying tactics and move on the Mass. Civil Rights Act amendment out of committee by 1/5/88.

This amendment which received overwhelming support in both the Mass. House and Senate for the first time in 15 years would add "sexual orientation" as a protected class in housing, employment, public accommodations, insurance, and credit.

It should be noted that Gov. Dukakis is running for the Democratic nomination for President in 1988. How he reacts to this may be used in some degree to measure his support of our community.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN: Call or write (by 1/5/88):

William Carrito, Director of Constituent Affairs  
DUKAKIS FOR PRESIDENT COMMITTEE

105 Chauncy St.

Boston, Mass. 02133

(617) 451-2430

Michael Dukakis, Governor

c/o H. Champion

State House

Boston, Mass. 02111

(617) 727-3600

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For further information contact: David LaFontaine at 617-328-3039. Thanks for your help.

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MEMBERSHIP - LVLGCC, P.O. Box 1656, Allentown, PA 18105-1656 433-7377 or 433-5444

Enclosed you will find \$10.00 each for a membership from January - September 1988.

(Note: Your membership will be renewable after August 31, 1988)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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Thank you for your support as a member of LVLGCC and your continued financial support of its projects... It's more important now than ever.



Events are held at the Center  
unless otherwise noted.

January 1988

Lambda Center  
742 Hamilton Mall  
2nd Floor  
Allentown, Pa. 18101  
433-7377 / 433-5444

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
				31 New Year's Eve Party 1am - ?	1	2
3 MCC - 7:30pm	4 12:00 Noon Downtown AA	5 Finance Committee 7:30pm	6	7	8	9
10 MCC - 7:30pm	11 12:00 Noon Downtown AA	12 Lambda Board of Directors 7:30pm	13	14	15 Annual Membership Meeting 7:30pm	16
17 MCC - 7:30pm	18 12:00 Noon Downtown AA	19 ASC Hotline 6:30pm Membership Fundraising 7:30pm	20	21 Video Night 8pm "Making Love"	22	23
24 MCC - 7:30pm MCC - 7:30pm 31	25 12:00 Noon N.O.W. Meeting 7:30 PM 22nd & 4th Annual	26 Lambda Valley Monthly Meeting Party 7:30pm	27	28 Coalition of Gay/Lesbian Parents 7:30pm	29	30